



City of Cincinnati

Date: October 14, 2002

For Immediate Release

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CITY MANAGER ISSUES STATEMENT REGARDING DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS IN THE ROGER OWENSBY, JR. CASE

STATEMENT

City Manager Valerie A. Lemmie

Re: Disciplinary Hearings Ordered in Owensby Case

This morning, I directed Chief Thomas Streicher, Jr. to hold disciplinary hearings for eight Cincinnati Police Officers involved in the death-in-custody case of Roger Owensby, Jr. Having received both the Internal Investigation Section report from the Cincinnati Police Department and the report from the Office of Municipal Investigations, I believe hearings are in order to determine the nature and extent of the violations of departmental policies and procedures as well as internal rules and regulations.

The process to which we will adhere in this matter, is governed by the FOP collective bargaining agreement and is established by precedent and past practice. The Police Chief will select a hearing officer from within the Cincinnati Police Department to consider the charges specified against Officers Robert Blaine Jorg, Patrick Caton, David Hunter, Jason Hodge, Darren Sellers, Victor Spellman, Brian Brazile, and Abraham Lawson. The hearing officer will make findings and recommendations regarding the charges for these officers in their role in the death of Mr. Roger Owensby, Jr. The hearing officer's recommendations will go to the Police Chief, City Solicitor and Human Resources Director for review and comment, who will in turn forward their recommendations to me. The final decision regarding the level of discipline for each officer will be made by the City Manager.

The officers are being charged with violating a range of departmental policies and procedures including those governing Use of Force and Securing, Handling, and Transporting of Prisoners. Charges have also been specified for violations of internal rules and regulations including, Failure of Good Behavior, Neglect of Duty, and Dishonesty.

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In directing the Police Chief to schedule a hearing for the eight officers involved in this matter, I stressed the need for expediency during this next phase of the process. I share the community's concerns regarding the need for timely hearings and a final disposition to this issue. While it is my expectation that the hearings will be concluded in a timely manner, it is absolutely essential that the process be fair, impartial, and thorough.

I stress the importance of diligently following each and every step of this process to its final conclusion. I believe that those involved in this final phase of the disciplinary process will act fairly and expeditiously to ensure that a proper resolution of this issue, consistent with the relevant laws and our collective bargaining agreement, is reached. I thank the family and friends of Mr. Owensby for their patience throughout this ordeal, and I ask the citizens of Cincinnati to join them in remaining patient as we work toward closure of this matter.

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